

STATEMENT BY IFUW (CONCHITA PONCINI) DURING THE LAST INFORMAL SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL FOR THE PURPOSE OF FINALISING AGENDA AND PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE FIRST FORMAL SESSION TO BE HELD FROM 19-30 JUNE 2006-06-18

Mr. President Designate,

Thank you for giving me the floor and we too congratulate you for your election.

I did not want to miss this golden opportunity of informal consultations, which is meant to lay a solid, credible and visionary foundation of the Human Rights Council, to make the following proposal :

In the Draft Agenda and Programme of Work on Dialogue and Cooperation, enumerated are human rights education and learning, advisory services, technical assistance and capacity building. Here we would like to propose that from the outset, gender mainstreaming should be clearly stipulated as ongoing and integrated process in the Programme of Work of the Council. As the delegate from the Russian Federation has rightly reminded, one should not forget the international treaties, instruments, principles and standards. Here, I wish to add and recall the most important legal instruments and declarations made at World Conferences which have built the milestones in the achievement of women's rights and gender equality and improving the status of women in general: First the CEDAW Convention of 1979 (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women), the Vienna Conference of 1993 where Women's Rights was reiterated as human rights and human rights are women's rights, the Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, followed by the ECOSOC decision of 1997 on Mainstreaming Gender throughout the UN system, the General Assembly 2000 and 2005 adoption of the Beijing +5 and +10 review on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and in Sept. 2005 the Outcome Document on the Millennium Development Goals.

Mr. President, the absence of mainstreaming the gender perspective in a systematic manner at the Commission on Human Rights has been an important lacuna in bringing coherence to the work of the CHR. It often confused women specific rights and gender equality. Women's rights are continuing to be couched in welfare concepts and of women as victims rather than looking at the differential impact and discriminatory practices that disadvantage women in achieving equality with men. They ignore women as also being both actors and catalysts of change, notably in peace and rights to development. Thank you.